

OBJECTIONS BROTHER KETCHERSIDE DOES NOT ANSWER

Editorial by Reuel Lemmons, in Firm Foundation, June 11, 1963

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We took notice last week of Brother Carl Ketcherside's series of articles which were submitted for publication in the Firm Foundation, rejected, and then run, along with correspondence concerning them in his own paper. This week we propose to set before the brotherhood once again a few objections to Brother K's teaching. We believe he is in direct contradiction to the scriptures, and that those who follow him will be harmed by his error. He has many things to say, and write, concerning the deplorable divisions among us and the need for a united body, with which all will fully agree. In fact they have all been said hundreds of times before. There is nothing new, or different, about them. But intermingled with this good dish is the poison. The taste of the dish is deceptive in that it hides the poison when you strip his writings of the things upon which we all agree there is laid bare a body of error to which we are forced to object. We list here not all, but a few, objections which have appeared in the pages of this paper.

1. Brother K teaches that the grace of God is wider than the authority of Christ, and that many be saved by the grace of God who have not submitted to the authority of Christ. In this teaching he seeks to make room for any conscientious person who has not obeyed the gospel.

2. Brother K makes a distinction between "the gospel" and "doctrine" which is foreign to the Bible. He teaches that "the gospel" is simply the good news and those facts necessary to establish the Deity of Jesus Christ. He teaches that "doctrine" is not connected with the gospel, but, rather, is simply teachings given to "the fellowship." Furthermore, according to him, baptism is neither gospel nor doctrine, but rather a "medial line" between the two. The Bible teaches no such division.

3. He teaches that after one has been made a child of God he may make all sorts of errors concerning doctrine, but none of these, regardless of how grievous, except for denying the Deity of Jesus Christ, can be a basis for withdrawal of fellowship.

4. He teaches that every sincere believer in the Messiahship of Jesus is a child of God, whether he is ever baptized or not, and is now his brother or sister in prospect. When asked in his open forum what he believed about the "sincere sprinkled," he said they are children of God and his brethren in prospect, and left the impression he believed they would be saved. He implied in his writings four years ago, however, that he thinks they will finally be lost. This is one indication among many that he is getting more liberal daily.

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5. Bro. K teaches that there must be diversity of belief among God's people in order for them to have unity. We do not believe the Bible teaches it. This is the old denominational pitch that thanks God that there are so many churches so one can join the one of his choice. His doctrine does not do one thing toward removing the sectarian spirit; he only advocates ignoring it.

6. Bro. K refuses to deal with the verb form of "Fellowship." He contends heartily that "fellowship" is a noun and only a noun. Yet the verb form is used more than once in the Bible.

7. His idea that error in doctrine, except for that of the antichrist, should never cause us to break fellowship puts him in opposition to Gal. 1:6-9 and Eph. 5:3-12. If God breaks fellowship with those who preach another gospel (or doctrine) why should not we? The latter passage excludes from heaven those who practice covetousness, envy, jealousy and "such like." Question: Should we fellowship those whom God excludes from heaven?

8. He teaches that all sectarianism is sin (which is true), but then urges complete fellowship of sectarians. We believe, as does he, that all of God's children are in the church of Christ but not in the "Church of Christ." So do all of the brethren we know. But we have never gone to such unscriptural positions to get over our ideas. He manifests a desire to help along the work the Campbells started by "uniting the Christians in all of the sects." In what is he going to unite them? He teaches that no visible establishment now existant (sic) on earth is the place in which they can be united, for all of them are sects. Campbell did help to provide something in which all of them could be united, and called upon Christians to come out of sectarian bodies and unite in one body. Bro. K, rather than calling them out of sectarian bodies, tells them to stay where they are and work as "concerned ones" for unity of all sects. This is neither in harmony with the work of Campbell, nor with the teachings of the scriptures. If sects are sinful and sectarianism sinful, then how can a servant of God urge Christians to stay in that which is sinful?

9. Bro. K thinks all the sons of God are in the church of Christ, but they are not all in one corral. That is what every Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian preacher in America preaches. Every one of them will "Amen" Ketcherside, and jeer a gospel preacher. If the Lord has sheep, and they are *not* in one corral, then it follows that they are in *more than one corral*. Bro. K should tell us what other corrals the Lord has sheep in beside the church of Christ. We do not hesitate to affirm that the church of Christ is the only corral in which the Lord has sheep.

10. Bro. K says, "Baptism is no part of apostolic doctrine, and it is not part of the gospel." He says further, "Preaching the gospel is one thing and telling people to be baptized is another." His conclusion is, "What is it to obey the gospel?" His answer: "They have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" His conclusion: "So belief of the report made concerning Jesus is obeying the gospel, climaxed by manifestation of that faith by baptism . . . this is the only test of faith." Now we have a question: The Roman Catholics, Mormons, Baptists, and scores of others have "believed the report," and have "climaxed by manifestation of that faith by baptism." Has God made them our brothers because we have a common father? Does "the fellowship" include all these and more? Bro. K infers, if he does not teach it outright, that it does.

11. His entire contention that unity is equated with brotherhood is false. "The fellowship" may be equated with brotherhood in one sense, but "The fellowship" and hence "the brotherhood" cannot be equated with unity.

12. The brother's position makes God responsible for unity, or the lack of it, because God is the author of "brotherhood." If he were right, then it would be as impossible for us not to have fellowship with each other as it would be impossible to be sons of the Father without the new birth. Yet, you can act and you can teach

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in such a way as to break the fellowship between you and God. Gal. 5:19-21 and 2 Thess. 3:6-14 both teach this truth. If you do live in such a way that God breaks fellowship with you, and your brother follows Ketcherside's teaching and *refuses* to break fellowship with you, then God will break the fellowship between himself and your brother. Thus your brother can and will be lost in hell for the sin of following Ketcherside's teaching. This is how serious his doctrine is. (More next week.)
